



FINANCIAL PLANNING STANDARDS BOARD



# Financial Planner Competency Profile

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Financial Planning Standards Board Ltd. (FPSB) manages, develops and operates certification, education and related programs for financial planning organizations so that they may benefit and protect the global community by establishing, upholding and promoting worldwide professional standards in financial planning. FPSB's commitment to excellence is represented by the marks of professional distinction – CFP, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER and CFP Logo mark.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FPSB's Financial Planner Competency Profile</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Financial Planner Abilities</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Financial Planner Abilities Framework.....	6
Financial Planner Abilities Matrix .....	8-10
Terms Used in the Financial Planner Abilities Matrix.....	11
<b>Financial Planner Professional Skills</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Financial Planner Professional Skills Matrix.....	13
<b>Financial Planning Body of Knowledge</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Financial Planning Body of Knowledge Framework.....	14
Financial Planning Body of Knowledge Topic Categories.....	15

## FPSB'S FINANCIAL PLANNER COMPETENCY PROFILE



A comprehensive analysis that identifies the abilities, skills and knowledge required to competently perform the tasks of a profession is the cornerstone of a quality professional credentialing program.

FPSB's Financial Planner Competency Profile – comprised of Financial Planner Abilities, Financial Planner Professional Skills and Financial Planning Body of Knowledge – describes the abilities, skills, attitudes, judgments and knowledge that a financial planning professional draws on when working with clients in financial planning engagements. To competently deliver financial planning to a client, a financial planning professional needs to combine the ability to carry out the tasks of financial planning (defined in the Financial Planner Abilities) using appropriate professional skills (defined in the Financial Planner Professional Skills) drawing on his or her knowledge of financial planning matters (defined in the Financial Planning Body of Knowledge). The effective combination of abilities, skills and knowledge is what defines the financial planning professional's performance as competent.

FPSB's Financial Planner Competency Profile reflects what a financial planning professional does today as well as expectations for the financial planning profession over the next five years. The Competency Profile describes the full range of abilities, skills and knowledge needed to competently deliver financial planning to clients. Financial planning professionals who have chosen to specialize or limit the scope of their practice (e.g., in one or two Financial Planning Components such as Estate Planning or Tax Planning) consider the entire set of financial planner abilities to identify which Financial Planner Ability to employ during a client engagement.

In creating its Financial Planner Competency Profile, FPSB described the abilities, skills and knowledge expected of anyone practicing financial planning. FPSB expects that clients of financial planning professionals will benefit from a globally accepted set of competency standards for financial planning professionals.

## FINANCIAL PLANNER ABILITIES



### Sample Financial Planner Ability

*Collection (Asset Management): 1.105 Collects information necessary to prepare detailed statement of investment holding.*

Financial planning is the process of developing strategies to assist clients in managing their financial affairs to meet life goals. The process of financial planning involves reviewing all relevant aspects of a client's situation across a large breadth of financial planning activities, including inter-relationships among often conflicting objectives.

FPSB's Financial Planner Abilities defines the complete set of competencies required of a financial planning professional. The Financial Planner Abilities describes the various tasks that financial planning professionals should be able to carry out during financial planning engagements with clients, regardless of practice type, setting or location. The financial planning professional draws on one or more of the Financial Planner Abilities, in addition to job-related skills, attitudes, judgments and knowledge, to competently deliver financial planning to clients.

Regardless of whether the financial planning professional offers comprehensive financial planning or has chosen to limit the scope or level of services (e.g., in one or two components such as Estate Planning or Tax Planning), the financial planning professional needs to be able to master the complete set of abilities required to competently deliver a comprehensive financial plan to a client.

Financial planning professionals should master each of the Financial Planner Abilities at an appropriate level, and will likely work with other professionals in evaluating and assessing various aspects of a client's financial situation (e.g., working with lawyers on estate planning matters, working with accountants on tax planning matters, etc.).

## **FINANCIAL PLANNER ABILITIES FRAMEWORK**

Each Financial Planner Ability describes a task that a financial planning professional performs when providing financial planning to a client. While recognizing the integrated nature of the Financial Planner Abilities and that each Ability could appear under multiple categories, for presentation purposes, FPSB has allocated each Financial Planner Ability vertically to one of three Financial Planning Functions (Collection, Analysis and Synthesis) and horizontally to one of six Financial Planning Components (Financial Management, Asset Management, Risk Management, Tax Planning, Retirement Planning and Estate Planning).

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING FUNCTIONS**

FPSB has categorized the Financial Planner Abilities into three Financial Planning Functions:

### **Collection**

During Collection, the financial planning professional collects the information required to develop a financial plan. Collection goes beyond simply gathering information to also include identifying related facts by making required calculations and arranging client information for analysis.

### **Analysis**

During Analysis, the financial planning professional identifies and considers issues, performs financial analysis and assesses the resulting information to be able to develop strategies for the client.

### **Synthesis**

During Synthesis, the financial planning professional synthesizes the information to develop and evaluate strategies to create a financial plan.

## **CORE FINANCIAL PLANNING COMPETENCIES**

Collection, Analysis and Synthesis can be further defined by Core Financial Planning Competencies.

During Collection, the two Core Financial Planning Competencies are:

1. Collects the quantitative information required to develop a financial plan.
2. Collects the qualitative information required to develop a financial plan.

While each of these Core Financial Planning Competencies has distinct and possibly related Financial Planning Abilities associated with it, both draw on the same Fundamental Financial Planning Practices for the Collection function.

During Analysis, the two Core Financial Planning Competencies are:

1. Considers potential opportunities and constraints to develop strategies.
2. Assesses information to develop strategies.

While each of these Core Financial Planning Competencies also has distinct and possibly related Financial Planner Abilities associated with it, both draw on the same Fundamental Financial Planning Practices for the Analysis function.

During Synthesis, the Core Financial Planning Competency, which draws on the Fundamental Financial Planning Practices for the Synthesis function, is:

1. Develops and evaluates strategies to create a financial plan.

## **FUNDAMENTAL FINANCIAL PLANNING PRACTICES**

The Fundamental Financial Planning Practices represent the competencies that relate to the financial planning professional's ability to:

- integrate among the various Core Financial Planning Competencies and Financial Planning Components; and
- understand and master the interrelationships among the various Financial Planner Abilities required to carry out a Financial Planning Function.

The financial planning professional will use one or more of the Fundamental Financial Planning Practices when providing financial planning to a client.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING COMPONENTS**

FPSB has categorized the Financial Planner Abilities into six Financial Planning Components:

1. Financial Management
2. Asset Management
3. Risk Management
4. Tax Planning
5. Retirement Planning
6. Estate Planning

A financial planning professional does not review tax, asset management or retirement needs in isolation when providing financial planning to a client. Similarly, a financial planning professional will incorporate at least one of the Financial Planner Abilities from a particular Financial Planning Function (e.g. Collection) or Component (e.g. Risk Planning) while working on a related, but separate, Function or area of a client's financial situation.

## FINANCIAL PLANNER ABILITIES MATRIX

Financial Planning Function		<b>COLLECTION</b> Collects the information required to develop a financial plan	
Fundamental Financial Planning Practices		1.001 Identifies the client's objectives, needs and values that have financial implications 1.002 Identifies the information required for the financial plan 1.003 Identifies the client's legal issues that affect the financial plan 1.004 Determines the client's attitudes and level of financial sophistication 1.005 Identifies material changes in the client's personal and financial situation 1.006 Prepares information to enable analysis	
Core Financial Planning Competencies		1.1 Collects the quantitative information required to develop a financial plan	1.2 Collects the qualitative information required to develop a financial plan
FINANCIAL PLANNING COMPONENTS	Financial Management	1.101 Collects information regarding the client's assets and liabilities 1.102 Collects information regarding the client's cash flow, income and / or obligations 1.103 Collects information necessary to prepare a budget 1.104 Prepares statements of the client's net worth, cash flow and budget	1.201 Determines the client's propensity to save 1.202 Determines how the client makes spending decisions 1.203 Determines the client's attitudes towards debt
	Asset Management	1.105 Collects information necessary to prepare detailed statement of investment holdings 1.106 Determines the client's current asset allocation 1.107 Identifies cash flows available for investment	1.204 Determines the client's experience with and attitudes and biases towards investments 1.205 Determines the client's investment objectives 1.206 Determines the client's tolerance for investment risk 1.207 Identifies the client's assumptions and return expectations 1.208 Identifies the client's time horizon
	Risk Management	1.108 Collects details of the client's existing insurance coverage 1.109 Identifies potential financial obligations	1.209 Determines the client's risk management objectives 1.210 Determines the client's tolerance for risk exposure 1.211 Determines relevant lifestyle issues 1.212 Determines health issues 1.213 Determines the client's willingness to take active steps to manage financial risk
	Tax Planning	1.110 Collects the information necessary to establish the client's tax position 1.111 Identifies taxable nature of assets and liabilities 1.112 Identifies current, deferred and future tax liabilities 1.113 Identifies parties relevant to the client's tax situation	1.214 Determines the client's attitudes towards taxation
	Retirement Planning	1.114 Collects the details of potential sources of retirement income 1.115 Collects the details of estimated retirement expenses	1.215 Determines the client's retirement objectives 1.216 Determines the client's attitudes towards retirement 1.217 Determines the client's comfort with retirement planning assumptions
	Estate Planning	1.116 Collects legal agreements and documents that impact estate planning strategies	1.218 Identifies the client's estate planning objectives 1.219 Identifies family dynamics and business relationships that could impact estate planning strategies

## FINANCIAL PLANNER ABILITIES MATRIX

Financial Planning Function		<h3>ANALYSIS</h3> <p>Considers potential opportunities and constraints and assesses information to develop strategies</p>	
Fundamental Financial Planning Practices		2.001 Analyzes the client's objectives, needs, values and information to prioritize the financial planning components	2.002 Considers inter-relationships among financial planning components
		2.003 Considers opportunities and constraints and assesses collected information across financial planning components	2.004 Considers the impact of economic, political and regulatory environments
		2.005 Measures the progress towards achievement of objectives of the financial plan	
Core Financial Planning Competencies		2.1 Considers potential opportunities and constraints to develop strategies	2.2 Assesses information to develop strategies
FINANCIAL PLANNING COMPONENTS	Financial Management	2.101 Determines whether the client is living within financial means	2.201 Assesses whether the emergency fund is adequate
		2.102 Determines the issues relevant to the client's assets and liabilities	2.202 Assesses the impact of potential changes in income and expenses
		2.103 Determines the client's emergency fund provision	2.203 Identifies conflicting demands on cash flow
		2.104 Considers potential cash management strategies	2.204 Assesses financing alternatives
	Asset Management	2.105 Calculates required rate of return to reach the client's objectives	2.205 Assesses whether investment return expectations are consistent with risk tolerance
		2.106 Determines the characteristics of investment holdings	2.206 Assesses whether asset holdings are consistent with risk tolerance and required rate of return
		2.107 Determines the implications of acquiring / disposing of assets	
	2.108 Considers potential investment strategies		
Risk Management	2.109 Determines characteristics of existing insurance coverage	2.207 Assesses exposure to financial risk	2.208 Assesses the client's risk exposure against current insurance coverage and risk management strategies
	2.110 Considers current and potential risk management strategies	2.209 Assesses the implications of changes to insurance coverage	2.210 Prioritizes the client's risk management needs
Tax Planning	2.111 Reviews relevant tax documents	2.211 Evaluates existing tax strategies and structures for suitability	2.212 Assesses financial impact of tax planning alternatives
	2.112 Considers potential tax strategies and structures		
Retirement Planning	2.113 Develops financial projections based on current position	2.213 Assesses financial requirements at retirement date	2.214 Assesses the impact of changes in assumptions on financial projections
	2.114 Determines if the client's retirement objectives are realistic	2.215 Assesses trade-offs necessary to meet retirement objectives	
	2.115 Considers potential retirement planning strategies		
Estate Planning	2.116 Projects net worth at death	2.216 Calculates potential expenses and taxes owing at death	2.217 Assesses the specific needs of beneficiaries
	2.117 Considers constraints to meeting the client's estate planning objectives	2.218 Assesses the liquidity of the estate at death	
	2.118 Considers potential estate planning strategies		

## FINANCIAL PLANNER ABILITIES MATRIX

Financial Planning Function		<b>SYNTHESIS</b> Synthesizes information to develop and evaluate strategies to create a financial plan
Fundamental Financial Planning Practices		<p>3.001 Prioritizes recommendations from the financial planning components to optimize the client's situation</p> <p>3.002 Consolidates the recommendations and action steps into a financial plan</p> <p>3.003 Determines the appropriate cycle of review for the financial plan</p>
Core Financial Planning Competency		3.1 Develops and evaluates strategies to create a financial plan
<b>FINANCIAL PLANNING COMPONENTS</b>	Financial Management	<p>3.101 Develops financial management strategies</p> <p>3.102 Evaluates advantages and disadvantages of each financial management strategy</p> <p>3.103 Optimizes strategies to make financial management recommendations</p> <p>3.104 Prioritizes action steps to assist the client in implementing financial management recommendations</p>
	Asset Management	<p>3.105 Develops asset management strategies</p> <p>3.106 Evaluates advantages and disadvantages of each asset management strategy</p> <p>3.107 Optimizes strategies to make asset management recommendations</p> <p>3.108 Prioritizes action steps to assist the client in implementing asset management recommendations</p>
	Risk Management	<p>3.109 Develops risk management strategies</p> <p>3.110 Evaluates advantages and disadvantages of each risk management strategy</p> <p>3.111 Optimizes strategies to make risk management recommendations</p> <p>3.112 Prioritizes action steps to assist the client in implementing risk management recommendations</p>
	Tax Planning	<p>3.113 Develops tax planning strategies</p> <p>3.114 Evaluates advantages and disadvantages of each tax planning strategy</p> <p>3.115 Optimizes strategies to make tax planning recommendations</p> <p>3.116 Prioritizes action steps to assist the client in implementing tax planning recommendations</p>
	Retirement Planning	<p>3.117 Develops retirement planning strategies</p> <p>3.118 Evaluates advantages and disadvantages of each retirement planning strategy</p> <p>3.119 Optimizes strategies to make retirement planning recommendations</p> <p>3.120 Prioritizes action steps to assist the client in implementing retirement planning recommendations</p>
	Estate Planning	<p>3.121 Develops estate planning strategies</p> <p>3.122 Evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of each estate planning strategy</p> <p>3.123 Optimizes strategies to make estate planning recommendations</p> <p>3.124 Prioritizes action steps to assist the client in implementing estate planning recommendations</p>

## TERMS USED IN THE FINANCIAL PLANNER ABILITIES MATRIX

**Asset Management** Strategies and techniques to optimize returns on assets in consideration of the client's requirements and constraints.

**Asset Allocation** An approach to decide how to invest a pool of resources in a broad array of asset classes to determine an asset mix that will best meet a client's return objectives with acceptable and appropriate risk levels.

**Budget** A statement that estimates the financial resources and expenditures for a given period.

**Cash Flow Statement** A statement that summarizes the cash inflows and cash outflows for a given period.

**Client** A person, persons or related entities with whom the financial planning professional has a formal planner-client relationship.

**Estate Planning** Strategies and techniques for preservation and distribution of accumulated assets.

**Financial Management** Strategies and techniques to optimize short and mid-term cash flow, assets and liabilities.

**Financial Plan** A methodically formulated and detailed strategy or group of strategies used to manage one's financial affairs to meet life goals.

**Financial Planning** The process of developing strategies to assist clients in managing their financial affairs to meet life goals.

**Fundamental Financial Planning Practices** The competencies that are pervasive across all Financial Planning Components that relate to the integration and interrelationships among the Financial Planner Abilities.

**Needs** An item or condition that is necessary.

**Net Worth Statement** A statement of assets and liabilities.

**Objectives** An outcome that is sought after or aimed for.

**Personal Financial Statements** Net Worth Statement, Cash Flow Statement and Budget, in aggregate.

**Qualitative Information** Information about client qualities, attitudes and preferences.

**Quantitative Information** Information about the client that is objective and measurable.

**Retirement Planning** Strategies and techniques for wealth accumulation and withdrawal during retirement years.

**Risk Management** Strategies and techniques to manage financial exposure due to personal risk. The terms risk, risk exposure and risk tolerance refer to the risk of financial loss due to personal circumstances.

**Strategy (Strategies)** A plan designed to achieve one or more specific objectives.

**Tax Planning** Strategies and techniques to maximize present value of after tax family net worth.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNER PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

The Professional Skills described in FPSB's Financial Planner Competency Profile identify the skills that a financial planning professional must be able to draw on to deliver advice to clients in financial planning engagements that involve a high degree of trust, uncertainty, complexity and mutual agreement with clients of varying circumstances, or when interacting with colleagues or others in a professional capacity.

Central to FPSB's concept of professionalism is the need for a financial planning professional to use his or her Professional Skills to work in the interest of clients and to uphold and promote the interests of the financial planning profession for the benefit of society.

FPSB had categorized the Professional Skills required of a financial planning professional into four areas:

1. Professional Responsibility
2. Practice
3. Communication
4. Cognitive

Within each Skill category, FPSB identified various components that indicate the practitioner has delivered financial planning at an appropriate level of competence and professionalism.

A financial planning professional needs to be able to seamlessly integrate one or more of the Professional Skills with appropriate knowledge and abilities into each of his or her professional actions and interactions, and commit to continually updating his Professional Skills to maintain competency in the field of financial planning.

A financial planning professional can use one or more of the Professional Skills to competently perform any Financial Planner Ability.

While some of the Professional Skills are specific to financial planning, many are common to all professions.

## FINANCIAL PLANNER PROFESSIONAL SKILLS MATRIX

FINANCIAL PLANNER PROFESSIONAL SKILLS MATRIX			
PS.1 Professional Responsibility	PS.2 Practice	PS.3 Communication	PS.4 Cognitive
<p>PS.101 Establishes trust in all professional relationships</p> <p>PS.102 Acts in the best interest of the client in providing professional services</p> <p>PS.103 Demonstrates ethical judgment</p> <p>PS.104 Demonstrates intellectual honesty and impartiality</p> <p>PS.105 Recognizes limits of competence and voluntarily seeks the counsel of and / or defers to other professionals when appropriate</p> <p>PS.106 Recognizes the public interest role of the profession and acts accordingly</p>	<p>PS.201 Complies with relevant financial services laws and regulations</p> <p>PS.202 Adheres to professional code of ethics and standards of practice</p> <p>PS.203 Makes appropriate judgments in areas not addressed by existing practice standards</p> <p>PS.204 Maintains awareness of changes in the economic, political and regulatory environments</p> <p>PS.205 Engages in continuous learning to ensure currency of knowledge and skills</p> <p>PS.206 Conducts appropriate research when performing analysis and developing strategies</p> <p>PS.207 Exercises autonomy and initiative in the performance of professional activities</p> <p>PS.208 Exercises responsibility for own and / or firm's ability to deliver services to the client for the duration of engagement</p>	<p>PS.301 Gives attention to what the client and others are saying and takes time to understand the points being made</p> <p>PS.302 Establishes good rapport with the client and others</p> <p>PS.303 Communicates information and ideas orally in a manner understandable to the client and others</p> <p>PS.304 Communicates information and ideas in writing in a manner understandable to the client and others</p> <p>PS.305 Presents logical and persuasive rationales</p> <p>PS.306 Deals effectively with objections and complaints</p> <p>PS.307 Gains agreement with the client and others</p>	<p>PS.401 Applies mathematical methods or formulas as appropriate</p> <p>PS.402 Analyzes and integrates information from a variety of sources to arrive at solutions</p> <p>PS.403 Uses logic and reasoning to consider the strengths and weaknesses of potential courses of action</p> <p>PS.404 Arrives at informed decisions when faced with incomplete or inconsistent information</p> <p>PS.405 Demonstrates capacity to adapt thinking and behaviors</p>

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE**

The ability to effectively practice as a financial planning professional requires a person to master theoretical and practical knowledge in a broad range of financial planning and related topics. Once a person has mastered the Financial Planning Body of Knowledge, he or she can combine that knowledge with professional skills and abilities to competently deliver financial planning.

Mastery of the financial planning profession's body of knowledge allows the financial planning professional to gain the respect and trust of clients, and builds the financial planning professional's confidence in his or her ability to competently practice.

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK**

FPSB's Financial Planning Body of Knowledge identifies the knowledge a financial planning professional must be able to draw on to deliver financial planning to clients, or when interacting with colleagues or others in a professional capacity.

FPSB categorized the Financial Planning Body of Knowledge into 11 areas:

- I. Taxation
- II. Insurance
- III. Investment
- IV. Retirement, Savings and Income Programs
- V. Law
- VI. Financial Analysis
- VII. Debt
- VIII. Economic and Regulatory Environment
- IX. Government Benefits Plans
- X. Behavioral Finance
- XI. Ethics and Standards

## **FINANCIAL PLANNING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE TOPIC CATEGORIES**

### **I. TAXATION**

1. Assessment Rules
2. Personal Taxation
3. Corporate Taxation
4. Wealth Transfer
5. International Tax Issues

### **II. INSURANCE**

6. Business Insurance
7. Life Insurance
8. Disability Insurance/Income Replacement
9. Health Insurance
10. Critical Illness Insurance (includes Dread Disease and Trauma)
11. Property Insurance
12. Casualty Insurance

### **III. INVESTMENT**

13. Investment Types
14. Investment Structures
15. Types of Investment Risk
16. Measurement of Investment Risk
17. Portfolio Management Techniques
18. Selling and Buying Techniques
19. Performance Measurement
20. Modern Portfolio Theory

### **IV. RETIREMENT, SAVINGS AND INCOME PROGRAMS**

21. Government Pension
22. Government Savings
23. Employer / Employee Programs
24. Personal Retirement
25. Personal Savings

### **V. LAW**

26. Private Law
27. Corporate Law

### **VI. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

28. Analysis of Financial Information
29. Personal Financial Ratios
30. Cash Management and Budgeting
31. Personal Financial Statements

### **VII. DEBT**

32. Consumer Credit and Credit Management
33. Mortgages
34. Leases
35. Insolvency and Bankruptcy

### **VIII. ECONOMIC AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT**

36. Economic Environment
37. Regulatory Environment

### **IX. GOVERNMENT BENEFITS PLANS**

### **X. BEHAVIORAL FINANCE**

### **XI. ETHICS AND STANDARDS**

38. Code of Ethics
39. Financial Planning Practice Standards





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